

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Reexamination of the captioned application is respectfully requested.

A. SUMMARY OF THIS AMENDMENT

By the current amendment, Applicants basically:

1. Amend all independent claims (i.e., independent claims 1, 19, 35, 36, 47, 51, 53, 55, 57, 59, 61, and 62) to include therein subject matter such as that of dependent claim 7.
2. Amend dependent claims 52, 54, 56, 58, and 60 for consistency with their respective amended independent claims.
3. Cancel claim 7 without prejudice or disclaimer.
4. Respectfully traverse all prior art rejections.
5. Petition for a Three Month Extension of Time.

B. PATENTABILITY OF THE CLAIMS

Claims 1, 2, 4, 5, 7-15, 17-19, 22, 23, 25, 31-33, 35-37, 39-43, 47, 49 and 50 stand rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent 5,468,942 to Oosterveen et al in view of U.S. Patent 6,164,546 to Kumagai et al. Claim 10 stands rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent 5,468,942 to Oosterveen et al in view of U.S. Patent 6,164,546 to Kumagai et al and further in view of U.S. Patent 6,199,753 to Tracy et al, further in view of U.S. Patent 5,696,366 to Ziarno and still further in view of U.S. Patent 6,157,005 to Lu. Claim 11 stands rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent 5,468,942 to Oosterveen et al in view of U.S. Patent 6,164,546 to Kumagai et al, further in view of U.S. Patent 5,696,366 to Ziarno, further in view of U.S. Patent 6,199,753 to Tracy et al and still further in view of U.S. Patent 4,673,932 to Ekchain et al. Claim 35 stands rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent 5,468,942 to Oosterveen et al in view of U.S. Patent 6,164,546 to Kumagai et al and further in view of U.S. Patent 6,199,753 to Tracy

et al and still further in view of U.S. Patent 5,696,366 to Ziarno. Claims 16, 28 and 34 stand rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent 5,468,942 to Oosterveen et al in view of U.S. Patent 6,164,546 to Kumagai et al and further in view of U.S. Patent 5,696,366 to Ziarno. Claims 21, 24 and 26 stand rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent 5,468,942 to Oosterveen et al in view of U.S. Patent 6,164,546 to Kumagai et al, further in view of U.S. Patent 5,696,366 to Ziarno and still further in view of U.S. Patent 5,397,882 to Van Solt. Claims 29, 30, 44-46, 48, 51, 53, 55, 57, 59, 61 and 62 stand rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent 5,468,942 to Oosterveen et al in view of U.S. Patent 6,164,546 to Kumagai et al and further in view of U.S. Patent 6,640,214 to Nambudiri et al and still further in view of U.S. Patent 5,696,366 to Ziarno. All prior art rejections are respectfully traversed for at least the following reasons.

All independent claims now essentially require that a second aperture of the compartments be larger than a first aperture of the compartments. Such is not taught or suggested by the applied prior art.

Although the office action alleges on page 7, subparagraph “m”, that Fig. 3 of U.S. Patent 5,468,942 to Oosterveen et al. teaches such feature, the office action contradicts itself and Oosterveen. Indeed, as pointed out on page 6, subparagraph l.ii, the “sub aperture” of Oosterveen near element 41 is “smaller”.

Applicants’ second aperture having a size larger than that of the first aperture is advantageous, e.g., for the purpose of further facilitating the discharge of objects and/or dust from the compartments (*see e.g.*, page 8, lines 17 – 20 of the specification).

C. MISCELLANEOUS

In view of the foregoing and other considerations, all claims are deemed in condition for allowance. A formal indication of allowability is earnestly solicited.

The Commissioner is authorized to charge the undersigned's deposit account #14-1140 in whatever amount is necessary for entry of these papers and the continued pendency of the captioned application.

Should the Examiner feel that an interview with the undersigned would facilitate allowance of this application, the Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,

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